

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 12, 2016

Mr. Robert Waterman, Compliance Specialist
Wage and Hour Division, U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Avenue NW
Room S-3510
Washington, DC 20210

Re: Proposed Department of Labor (Wage and Hour Division) Rule on Establishing Paid Sick Leave for Federal Contractors (RIN 1235-AA13)

Dear Mr. Waterman:

We are writing to express our strong support for the U.S. Department of Labor's proposed rule implementing Executive Order 13706, Establishing Paid Sick Leave for Federal Contractors.

The lack of guaranteed paid sick days forces far too many working families to make an impossible choice between caring for themselves and their loved ones and providing for them. The American people deserve better. That is why we support Senator Patty Murray and Rep. Rosa DeLauro's bill, the Healthy Families Act which would guarantee workers the right to earn up to seven paid sick days to care for themselves or a loved one who is sick, or take time off to address domestic violence.

In the absence of a comprehensive national solution from Congress, however, we are pleased that action, such as the President's Executive Order and your implementing rule, is being taken at the local, state, and executive levels. Nationally, nearly 4-in-10 private sector workers do not have access to any sick leave at all. Low-wage workers are disproportionately represented in that population. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, almost all workers in the top 25 percent of the economy have access to paid sick days (84 percent) while only 20 percent of workers in the bottom 10 percent have some sick leave available. This proposed rule will help to close that gap. The proposed rule will directly benefit an estimated 828,000 employees of federal contractors, including an estimated 437,000 employees who currently receive no paid sick days. These employees will join the approximately 10 million or more workers across the country who have or will soon have access to paid sick days as a result of laws that have been enacted in five states, the District of Columbia and more than 20 localities across the country.


Providing paid sick days benefits both workers and employers. The proposed rule will improve the economy and efficiency of federal contracting. Evidence from the private sector indicates that paid sick days help reduce the costs of employee turnover, reduce the risk of workplace

contagion and injury, and lead to improvements in worker productivity. The experience of employers in states and localities with paid sick day laws and ordinances also shows that most employers do not face undue burdens or challenges when these laws go into effect. Contractors who already provide paid time off will be exempt from the rule as long as their policies meet certain conditions. Contractors that do not already provide time off will face some burdens as they develop and implement that policy but, again, experience demonstrates that those burdens are minimal and are far outweighed by the benefits of having paid sick days.

The proposed rule also contains important provisions on notice, interference, discrimination, and enforcement. Workers will not exercise their rights if they believe that they will be fired for doing so. Nearly half of private sector workers say their employers have policies that punish workers for using paid sick time. The proposed rule requires contractors to notify employees of the paid sick time requirements, prohibits interference with an employee's accrual or use of paid sick time, and discrimination against an employee for using or attempting to use paid sick time or cooperating or participating in an investigation about use of paid sick time.

We strongly support the Department's efforts in this area and we hope that the Administration will move quickly to finalize the rule. Thank for you for considering these comments. We look forward to continuing to work with you on guaranteeing that workers on federal contracts have access to paid sick days.

Sincerely,



ROBERT C. "BOBBY" SCOTT
Ranking Member
Committee on Education and
Workforce



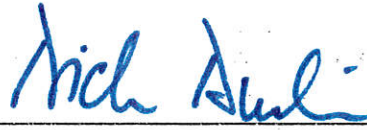
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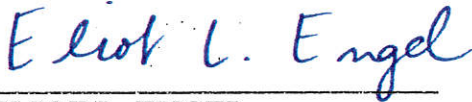
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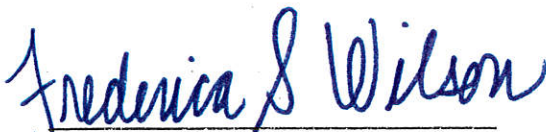
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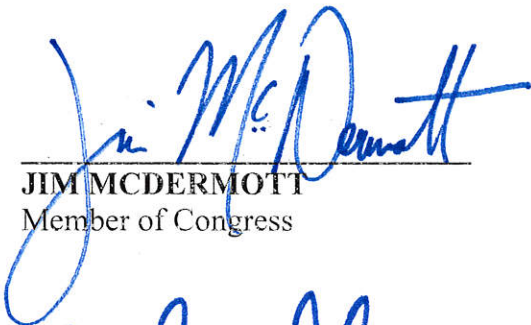
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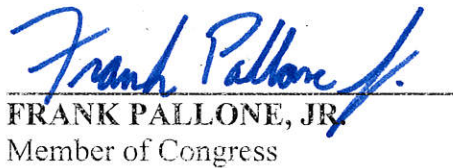
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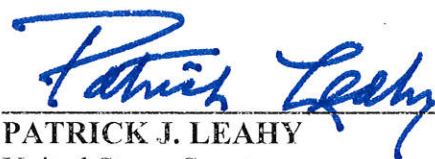
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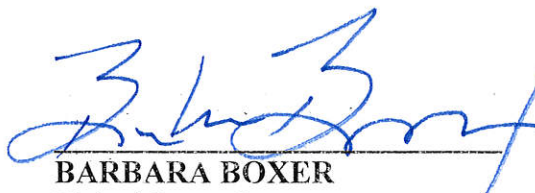
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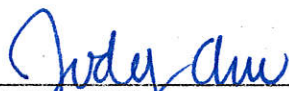
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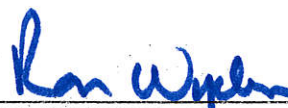
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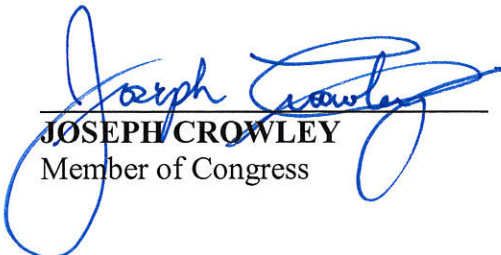

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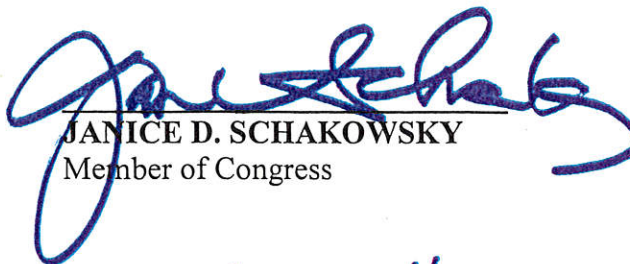

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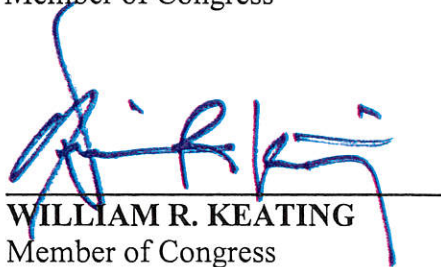
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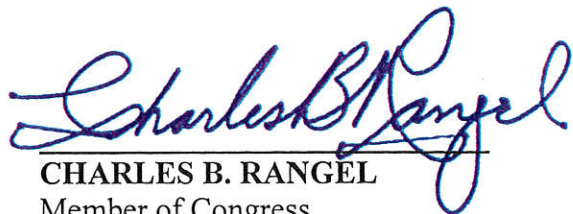
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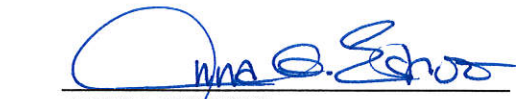
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